

Getting Wired for Mars - November 23, 2010

[00:00:06]John Wirth: Hi, my name is John Wirth and this is your Building Curiosity Update.

[00:00:10]I am the MSL ATLO electrical lead, which means I'm the 'head sparky.'

[00:00:16]'Sparky' means we do all the electrical integration. We verify that the connectors are meeting correctly.

[00:00:20]We do all that kind of stuff.

[00:00:22]We're asked quite often why we have to hook up our wire to this ground lug.

[00:00:26]And what this does is this bleeds our electrical charge on our body to the earth.

[00:00:31]The rover has sensitive electronics in it, so if we got close with a charge, it might damage it.

[00:00:37]This just ensures that we're down to a zero charge when we work on the rover.

[00:00:41]So what we're doing today is we're getting ready for system tests.

[00:00:45]We load some flight software, which is the 'brain' -- software in your brain -- trying to tell this thing

[00:00:50]that hey, I'm going to simulate going through launch, cruise, EDL and surface operations.

[00:00:57]So what the guys are doing now is they're electrically connecting up each of the vehicles together

[00:01:02]so it thinks it's mechanically hooked together,

[00:01:04]which tells the rover or makes the rover think that it's going to go through all its mission phases

[00:01:10]to ensure the flight software and the electronics will actually work when we get to Mars.

[00:01:18]We're one year away from launch, and so right now is a real busy time for us

[00:01:24]because we're trying to prepare the hardware to get going to Florida next year.

[00:01:27]So right now everybody can actually see the light at the end of the tunnel cause we're getting close to launch

[00:01:33]so everybody is excited about making things happen right now.

[00:01:37]This has been your Building Curiosity Update, and I'm John Wirth.

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